



**VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**



Email:

adventureclub@qicreative.com
or info@qicreative.com

Call us for more information:

(780) 554-8745

Learn More:

qiadventureclub.com | qicreative.com



[@QiCreativeInc](https://twitter.com/QiCreativeInc)



Celebrate with us
facebook.com/qicreative



[@QiAdventureClub](https://instagram.com/QiAdventureClub)



THANK YOU!

and welcome to Qi Adventure Club!

Thank you for volunteering with Qi Adventure Club (Qi AC)! Your efforts allow us to safely and successfully support participants with various needs. With your help, more families can enjoy adaptive adventure experiences in our community.

We want to ensure you and your ideas are warmly welcomed into Qi Adventure Club. Qi AC recognizes that every volunteer has different experiences and backgrounds, which excites us. We encourage you to let your awesome personality shine!

This manual has been created to ensure that coaches and volunteers understand and agree with the philosophy of Qi AC. The manual includes the Participant Protection Policy, the Volunteer Code of Conduct, general information about our adventures, and tips and tricks on how to be an awesome volunteer.

Reading this manual is considered part of your orientation into Qi AC. Please feel free to ask us questions anytime throughout your volunteering experience.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Why Volunteer..... | 4 |
| Participant Protection Policy | 6 |
| Working with Participants..... | 12 |
| Become a Volunteer / Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement | 15 |

WHY VOLUNTEER

Why Volunteer?

Volunteering with Qi AC is a rewarding and exciting experience. Not only will you meet awesome volunteers, coaches, and participants, but you will also get to try a lot of adventures free of charge. Rental equipment or any cost involved in an adventure will be waived for all volunteers. In addition, after volunteering 40 hours or more of your time, Qi AC will provide you with a reference letter. If you want to gain experience leading a particular activity or skill, talk to a Qi AC coach, and together, a plan can be made to take on more responsibility.

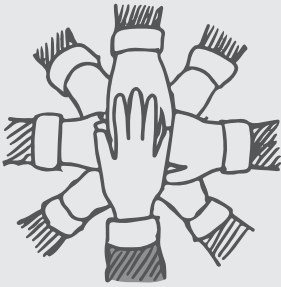
What are my roles for a typical Adventure?

Generally, you will be asked to arrive 30 minutes before for a briefing on the adventure and the roles and responsibilities expected from you as a volunteer. As a result, the volunteers will know who to look out for and how to best welcome the participants.

Qi AC expects volunteers to be as enthusiastic as the participants. The participants will feel energized if others are excited, too! Qi AC also expects that volunteers come with an open mind since some adventures may be outside their comfort zone, and some participants may make jokes that do not always make sense.

Depending on the ratio between volunteers and participants, each volunteer will likely be partnered with one or two participants joining the adventure. This will be made clear in the briefing before the program begins. Being partnered with someone does not mean you can only spend time with this person. It just means that you are looking out for them, making them feel included, and ensuring they are sticking with the group.

After the adventure, we will remain on site to debrief and discuss what went well and what could be improved. You are invited to share stories of challenges or successes during this time.



“ Alone we can
do so little;
together we can
do so much.”

- Hellen Keller

Do I have to commit to a certain number of adventures?

You are welcome to sign up for as many or as little as you like.

Cancellations

Qi AC understands that life happens. We get sick, we double book ourselves, and forget about appointments, for example. That being said, we count on our volunteers to show up when expected.

If you need to cancel, please e-mail adventureclub@qicreative.com or call the Qi AC coach leading the adventure.

PARTICIPANT PROTECTION POLICY

Disclosing Personal Information

In an inclusive and high-support environment, participants may share personal and confidential information with you. The following will discuss what to do if a participant discloses information that is potentially dangerous or harmful to them.

If there is any indication that a participant has been harmed or is currently in a harmful situation, volunteers are required to inform a Qi AC coach, who will work to create a plan to notify authorities. If a participant is in immediate danger, the volunteer should contact the police immediately.

If a participant discloses being abused or knows of someone being abused, it is suggested that you:

- » **Listen attentively** – Hear the participant’s story, remain calm, and let them speak for as long as they need to.
- » **Get the basic facts** – Only collect the facts needed to report the incident. Do not ask the participant many questions, as this may make the process more difficult for them.
- » **Be a friend** – Make sure the participant knows they did the right thing by telling you what happened. Make sure they know they have not done anything wrong.
- » **Keep nothing a secret** – First, do not promise to keep a secret. You have a legal duty to report the disclosure. Second, inform the participant of the next step by telling them they may have to speak with another adult (Qi Creative coach, police, or child protection). The legal duty to report outweighs any duty of confidentiality.
- » **You do not need proof** – Your job is to report your concern or any disclosures you may have witnessed.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Collecting and Safeguarding Personal Information

We want to ensure personal information is protected at all times, so the following must be adhered to:

- » Volunteers will not discuss the actions or character of another person in front of participants or anyone outside of Qi AC.
- » Any written reference to participants in public areas must include first names only.
- » To take pictures or video of a participant or volunteer, the individual or their caregiver must share informed consent as a signed photo release or verbal consent. If verbal consent is given, share this information immediately with a Qi AC coach.
- » Any notes containing information used to identify participants must be treated as confidential.
- » Confidential material must not be left unattended.
- » Cellphones and computers containing personal information should be password protected and not left unattended.

Discipline and Conflict Resolution

If a conflict arises between you and a participant, follow these steps:

1. Develop an empathetic awareness of the participant and their situation. Are they feeling overwhelmed by the new activity? Are they frustrated? What is the stimulus of the frustration?
2. Provide options to the participant that can help end the conflict. This could include taking a break from the activity, having something to eat, taking medication, engaging in a self-regulating activity, talking to their caregiver, engaging in the adventure differently, engaging in the activity with a different volunteer or Coach, or ending it early.
3. Negotiate with the participant to find a mutually acceptable resolution to the problem. Success and fun will look different for everyone, and your time as a volunteer is important to us, no matter the length or intensity of participant engagement.
4. Be Assertive. If the behaviour is inappropriate, ensure they know you want them to stop. Keep your voice calm, but make sure you speak clearly and strongly.

If you are having a challenging time with the situation or if the participant is continuing to misbehave, let a Qi AC coach know.



“ *The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.*

- Gandhi

Professional Relationships and Internet Communication

Qi Adventure Club programs are adaptive, inclusive environments with a strong social component. To protect Qi AC coaches, participants, and volunteers, we must ensure all relationships created remain professional and do not cross personal and professional boundaries.

Keeping a professional relationship means:

- » You will not pursue relationships outside of the Qi AC programs.
- » You will not share personal contact information such as telephone numbers, personal email, social media handles, and home addresses.
- » Be conscious of what is reasonable to promise participants, doing what you can to deliver on agreements.
- » Ensure participants are informed in advance of the terms of your relationship. Maintaining professional relationships is also important, as it maintains the power dynamics between instructor and participant. If lines become blurry, a participant may no longer understand that you are in charge, which can cause confusion.

Avoid online communications with participants for the following reasons:

- » A false sense of privacy is created, which may put participants' confidentiality at risk.
- » Increases the risk of unintentional self-disclosures from both volunteers and participants.
- » Increases the likelihood of miscommunication.
- » This makes it challenging to confirm the identity of the people communicating.

In the event of a Serious Incident

If a serious incident or injury occurs when participating in an adventure, you must take any action a Qi AC coach asks you to do. If you are a witness, this may include writing an incident report.

If news outlets intend to contact you, please refrain from providing them with information and notify Qi Adventure Club staff.

Language

When talking about individuals living with disabilities, it is important that you use the most respectful and appropriate language possible.

Person-first (“person with autism”) and Identity-first (“autistic person”) are two linguistic descriptions used to identify disabled people around us. However, **identity-first is the preferred choice** as it respects the individual’s self-identification and challenges societal stigmas. It’s always best to ask and follow how a disabled person would like to address themselves. Remember, you don’t need to mention someone’s condition to others unless it’s relevant to the conversation.

Be aware of your other language, as some words become outdated. Below are some definitions of common language surrounding adaptive populations and when you should/should not use the following terms:

Handicap – This word is outdated. Please do not use it to refer to any person or group of people.

Disability – A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. It is used to describe both groups of people and individuals. Disability is a broad term, and much like identity-first or person-first language, honouring the preference of who you are speaking with shows awareness, respect and solidarity.

Impairment – The use of this word is discouraged, and other substitutions, such as “hard of hearing” rather than “hearing impaired” and “low vision” rather than “vision impaired”, are encouraged.

Special Needs – This is a word used to describe individuals who may be diagnosed with disabilities, other serious illnesses, or developmental disorders. At Qi Creative, we are phasing out ‘Special Needs’ and adopting the use of ‘All Abilities’ to reflect the diversity of our clients, participants, volunteers, and community.

Language is constantly evolving in disability culture, and what is acceptable now may be unacceptable in the future. It’s important to be respectful and appropriate with the language you use. If you are unsure of what to say, remember that intention is more important than knowing the ‘right’ words to say in every situation.

The Qi Adventure Club is a safe place to learn and explore these concepts. If you have any questions surrounding language, feel free to ask Qi AC staff any questions.

Ability-Focused Talk

Qi Creative is a success and strength-based practice.

This means that team members celebrate and use clients' strengths to overcome some of the challenges clients may face.

We focus on what people can do rather than what they cannot do. Qi AC works in the same way. Rather than focusing on a participant's challenge(s), try to incorporate what the participant is good at and approach the challenge from a different angle.

As a side note, being ability-focused does not mean you can never talk about an issue you may have with a participant. We understand that we all face challenges that must be addressed. However, we look at these challenges in a positive light.

When you are with us on an adventure, keep a positive attitude and remember to think creatively. Your creativity is key to finding unique solutions! For instance, if a participant does not want to do an activity, try incorporating something they love into the activity to change their perspective. Try different techniques, and you will soon find out what works best.



“ *A positive attitude brings strength, energy and initiative.* ”

- Remez Sasson

WORKING WITH PARTICIPANTS

Helpful tips for working with individuals with a variety of support needs

We want volunteers to feel as comfortable as possible when working with individuals requiring extra support. This section provides some valuable tips. However, please understand that this information is very general, as each individual is different. If you have any questions about how to support someone, feel free to collaborate with the Qi AC team.

Qi AC is open to anyone of all ages and abilities. This means we may have participants with a variety of support needs. Here are some tips that may be helpful for you:

- » If you are unsure how best to support someone, ask them directly or their caregiver(s).
- » Sometimes, physical support requires more than one person. If that is the case, ask other volunteers or coaches around you to help.
- » When meeting new participants, get to know them and learn what they like to do. If they share a hobby they're interested in, explore and celebrate that! Often, participants feel more comfortable when you are talking to them about what they know best.
- » One aspect of Qi AC is pushing individuals to step outside of their comfort zone so they can grow and develop new skills. This could involve talking to new people, joining in new activities, or taking on a leadership role. Empower participants to make choices and engage in activities as independently as possible.
- » If you think a participant is able to do something on their own, without help, let them try and support as needed.

- » Encourage participants to finish a sentence they are struggling to complete rather than try to finish it for them.
- » If a participant refuses to join an activity, try to reframe the activity as two choices (kick the ball/throw the ball) rather than play/do not play.
- » If a participant is refusing to join, understand that it is okay if they need to sit out.
- » Some individuals may struggle with transitioning from one activity to the next. Providing countdowns, reminders, and other strategies can help participants prepare for the change.
- » Some participants may be anxious, especially in a new place with new people trying a new adventure. Be patient and explore what level of engagement in the activity they would like to start with (e.g. Walking around the space, touching equipment, watching another participant play, engaging with high support)
- » Some participants may ask frequent questions unrelated to the activity (e.g., asking about the time or your opinion on a favourite thing). Try your best to redirect to the activity where possible.
- » If you have any questions on how to support participants or need support with a specific participant, contact a Qi AC coach during the adventure or via email.

Thank you so much for expressing interest in the Qi Adventure Club. We look forward to having you join us on an adventure!

Woosh!



Email:

adventureclub@qicreative.com
or info@qicreative.com

Call us for more information:


(780) 554-8745

Learn More:

qiadventureclub.com | qicreative.com

 [@QiCreativeInc](https://twitter.com/QiCreativeInc)

 Celebrate with us
facebook.com/qicreative

 [@QiAdventureClub](https://www.instagram.com/QiAdventureClub)

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

The Process

To volunteer with Qi AC, you must complete a registration form, which can be found on the Qi Adventure Club website.

Once you have submitted the form, a program representative will contact you to discuss the next steps and get to know you better.

As part of our commitment to safety, we require all potential volunteers to complete a Criminal Record Check for the Vulnerable Population. This can be done either at a police station or online.

The list below is what you need to have completed and submitted to adventureclub@qicreative.com before you can start volunteering with Qi AC.

Requirements Checklist:

- » Completed Qi AC Volunteer Registration Form
 - » Up-to-date resume with two references
 - » Criminal Record Check for the Vulnerable Population
 - » A signed Volunteer Code of Conduct
 - » Completed Adventure Waiver/Release Form
-

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Respect

1) Participants, Volunteers and Staff Members

- » I understand and agree to keep the information I learn about participants, staff and volunteers confidential.
- » If a participant discloses private information that may harm them, I understand that the legal duty to report this information to Qi Staff outweighs any duty of confidentiality.
- » I will respect the identities of all participants and support participants with an ability-focused attitude.
- » I will be welcoming to all abilities.

Continued on back >

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT CONTINUED

1) Participants, Volunteers and Staff Members *(Continued)*

- » I will decline to borrow/lend money and/or property from participants.
- » I will refrain from accepting gifts, tips, or gratuities from participants.
- » I will maintain a professional boundary with participants.
- » This includes refraining from giving personal contact information and communicating through social media sites.
- » I will be aware of each participant's support needs and do my best to make them feel comfortable.

2) Yourself

- » I will push myself to try new activities and take on new roles that I may not at first feel comfortable trying.
- » I will bring my prior experience to add an enriching experience for everyone.
- » I will not be afraid to ask questions, as I want to learn as much as possible from the club's staff, other volunteers and participants.
- » I care about ethical professional conduct and will not be afraid to consult other volunteers or staff when facing ethical dilemmas.

3) Program

- » I will arrive on time.
- » If I need to cancel, I will notify Qi AC as soon as possible.
- » I will read the emails sent from Qi AC.
- » I will refrain from consuming alcohol and/or illegal drugs or being under immediate effects of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while performing work or work-related duties for Qi AC.

I, _____, have read and understand the Volunteer Code of Conduct and will practice respect to the best of my ability. I also understand that if I fail to follow the code of conduct, I may not be permitted to volunteer.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____